

The Project Professional's GenAI Journey:

From Quick Wins to
Leading the Transformation

Foreword



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The Project Management Institute's (PMI) third thought leadership report on AI's impact on the project profession — *The Project Professional's GenAI Journey: From Quick Wins to Leading the Transformation* — makes one thing clear: AI is a game-changer for organizational performance.

In the short term, AI delivers quick wins — boosting efficiency, automating routine tasks and eliminating busywork. It raises the floor for project performance. If you're not using AI for at least basic tasks, you have to ask yourself — why not?

But the real excitement isn't just in raising the floor — it's in raising the ceiling. AI has the power to redefine what project professionals can achieve, transforming organizations and reshaping industries. To unlock this, professionals need to step up their games — developing not just technical project management skills but also a proactive, learning-driven mindset. The two critical factors? **Preparedness** — deep technical and management skills — and **initiative** — collaboration, curiosity and adaptability.

As this report shows, the project professionals who embrace AI in more than 50% of their projects are the ones leading the charge. The takeaway is simple — your ability to harness AI and drive its successful adoption depends on the investments you make in yourself. Learning, experimenting and pushing the boundaries of AI will define who thrives in this new era.

Leaders and executives have a role too. Organizations that actively invest in AI education, encourage experimentation and implement smart governance will turn AI into a serious competitive advantage.

AI isn't on the horizon — it's here, now, and it's changing everything. Project professionals have a unique opportunity to lead this revolution and establish project management as a driving force of AI transformation. PMI is doing its part — through reports like this, e-learning, guides and more. Now, it's up to you. Step up, master AI, and shape the future of our profession.

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1 | Executive Summary

The project management profession is undergoing a transformative shift with the adoption of generative AI (GenAI). However, this shift favors the industrious; our research finds that while most project professionals and organizations achieve notable productivity gains through initial applications of GenAI, unlocking transformative benefits requires strategic commitment and advanced practices. Most individuals can achieve quick wins of 2x to 3x increases in GenAI adoption and productivity through basic applications. However, progressing to more advanced productivity levels (3x+ gains) demands two critical elements: preparedness and initiative.

Preparedness involves cultivating technical skills, domain knowledge and project management expertise to fully leverage GenAI's capabilities. Initiative requires a commitment to continuous learning, experimentation and collaboration. Data reveals that Trailblazers — those using GenAI for over 50% of their projects — demonstrate these characteristics much more often than those who use GenAI less. As such, they are eight times more likely than Explorers — those using GenAI for 1% to 15% of their projects — to achieve advanced adoption rates, and 16 times more likely to achieve advanced productivity gains. These high performers excel by combining self-directed learning with organizational support and applying GenAI to complex tasks such as cost management and decision support, moving beyond basic automation.

For project professionals looking to lead the transformation, the report advises taking ownership of their learning journey, experimenting with GenAI tools and seeking organizational support. Ultimately, the integration of GenAI into project management offers significant opportunities for those who proactively engage with the technology, positioning themselves as leaders within their organizations and the broader project management community.

Definitions

TRAILBLAZERS: Project professionals using GenAI for over 50% of their projects

EXPLORERS: Project professionals using GenAI for 1% to 15% of their projects

PEAK ORGANIZATIONS: Organizations providing strong strategic guidance, governance structures, and resources that enable project professionals to adopt GenAI for project management

FOUNDATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS: Organizations that are in the very early stages of providing GenAI support mechanisms, such as strategic guidance, governance structures and resources

Summary of Reports 1 and 2

Over the last year, our research into GenAI adoption in project management has highlighted key trends transforming the profession. This is the third report of this series.

In our first report, titled “[First Movers’ Advantage](#),” we identified two key groups of GenAI users in project management: Trailblazers and Explorers. The research showed that Trailblazers have gained significant advantages by using GenAI not only for routine task automation but also for enhancing complex functions like risk management and decision-making, reporting notable improvements in productivity, creativity and problem-solving capabilities.

Our second report, “[Pushing the Limits](#),” built on these insights by identifying specific project tasks that offer the greatest potential value from GenAI adoption. The research revealed a natural progression from automating basic, time-consuming tasks to augmenting more complex project management activities. This progression enables project professionals to achieve immediate productivity gains while working toward more transformative outcomes.

Both reports emphasized that organizational support — through clear strategies, governance and resources — is essential for scaling these benefits across the enterprise. Trailblazers’ success in areas like project scope, scheduling, cost and quality management demonstrates the significant advantages available to early adopters who receive proper organizational backing.

A critical finding across both reports is the distinction between Peak and Foundational organizations. Peak organizations drive transformative outcomes by fostering environments where GenAI thrives, whereas Foundational organizations often constrain GenAI’s potential.

Additionally, AI adoption has been asymmetrical between individuals and organizations. While the proportion of Trailblazers increased from 20% to 37% in the three months between our first two research efforts, organizational progress remains slower. This highlights the ongoing need for organizations to prioritize strategic enablement to scale GenAI’s transformative power effectively.

For this report, we wanted to know how individuals can come to lead this GenAI transformation in project management. Users do not go from Explorers to Trailblazers overnight. Instead, it is a journey with peaks and valleys while navigating a new, complicated and ever-evolving technology. We delve into how project professionals can go from having quick wins to overcoming setbacks and eventually leading the way with GenAI.

To dive deeper into the findings, we encourage exploring “[First Movers’ Advantage](#)” and “[Pushing the Limits](#),” available on the [PMI Thought Leadership](#) page. These reports provide comprehensive insights into the evolution of GenAI adoption and the strategies driving its success in project management.

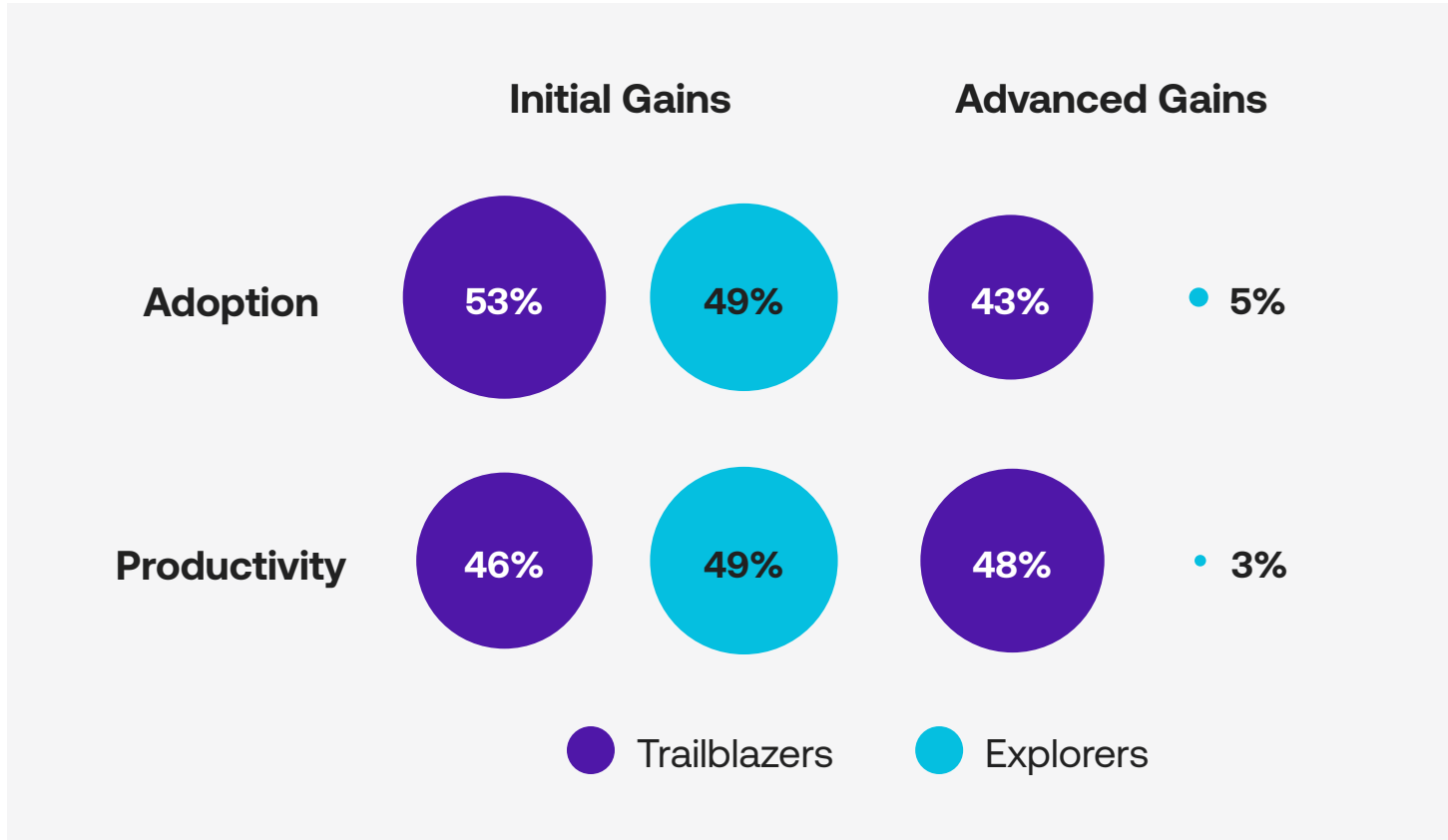
2 | From Quick Wins to Leading the Transformation

The project management profession stands at the cusp of a technological revolution, with GenAI emerging as a transformative force that promises to redefine how projects are conceived, executed and delivered. This breakthrough is gaining momentum across industries — Gartner¹ reports that GenAI is now the most frequently deployed AI solution in organizations. Further, in a BCG² study, 89% of executives ranked AI and GenAI as a “top three” technology priority for 2024.

This increased focus on GenAI is evident in its growing adoption among project professionals. While many start by using GenAI for basic tasks like summarizing meeting notes, conducting research and streamlining communications — gaining quick wins that soon become normalized — the real transformative power emerges when adoption reaches deeper levels.

Looking at the data, both Explorers and Trailblazers see initial increases of 2x to 3x in usage and corresponding productivity gains (Figure 1). However, the most significant opportunities lie beyond these initial efficiency improvements. As project professionals advance to more sophisticated applications of GenAI, including autonomous agents and process automation, they can fundamentally transform how projects are executed — redesigning workflows, reimagining collaboration patterns and reshaping how teams deliver value. This evolution from productivity tool to transformation catalyst represents the true frontier for the project management profession.

FIGURE 1. Comparing GenAI Adoption and Productivity Increases for Project Professionals



Q: During the last six months, on approximately what percentage of your projects have you used GenAI for managing project work?

Q: Using the slider below, please indicate how much your use of GenAI for managing projects has increased compared to six months ago.

Q: Using the slider below, please indicate how much your use of GenAI has increased your productivity when managing projects.

Source: PMI — Generative AI in Project Management Survey: Wave 3 (n=2,000)

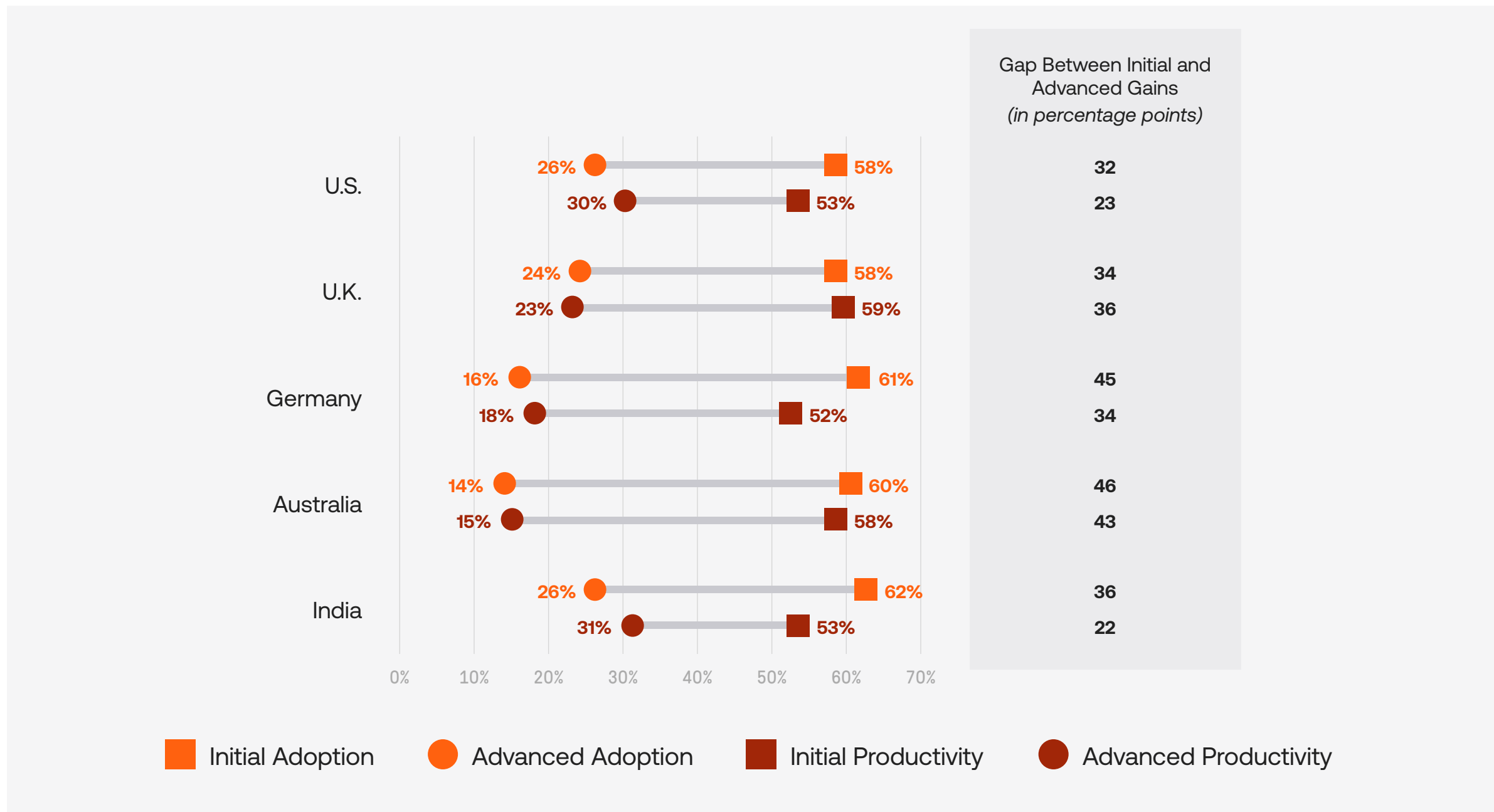
The accessibility of GenAI is highlighted by its worldwide impact. Among countries with substantial sample sizes, initial increases were consistent regardless of region (Figure 2). Even more telling is how widespread these initial gains were (see Figure 12 in the Appendix) despite differences in both user types and organizational support levels. This includes India, which showed notably higher rates of Trailblazers and Peak organizations.

While these initial adoption increases and productivity gains are positive and show GenAI's broad value in project management, they represent just the starting point. The key challenge — and opportunity — is moving beyond these quick wins to realize GenAI's full transformative potential.

We find ourselves at a critical juncture of opportunity and urgency. The swift evolution of GenAI technologies, combined with growing competitive pressures, requires prompt action from project professionals and their organizations to fully leverage AI tools.

As we explore GenAI's innovative applications, a critical question arises: How can project professionals and organizations progress beyond initial adoption to achieve advanced (3x+ increases in GenAI adoption and productivity) gains with GenAI? This report, [the third in our series on GenAI](#),³ aims to provide actionable insights and strategies to help project professionals and organizations unlock GenAI's full potential and benefit from more transformational impact.

FIGURE 2. GenAI Adoption and Productivity Gains Across Key Global Markets



Q: Using the slider below, please indicate how much your use of GenAI for managing projects has increased compared to six months ago.

Q: Using the slider below, please indicate how much your use of GenAI has increased your productivity when managing projects.

Note: These countries were selected because their base size in the survey was large enough to make nationwide comparisons. The Appendix contains a full breakdown of GenAI users and organizations for every country we surveyed.

Source: PMI — Generative AI in Project Management Survey: Wave 3 (n=2,000)

In this report, we'll explore the following key points:

-  GenAI success depends on readiness for rapid adoption and advancement (preparedness) plus commitment through a resilient mindset and culture of experimentation to sustain growth (initiative).
-  The real challenge — and opportunity — in integrating GenAI into project management comes when users seek advanced, more sustainable gains. Though more challenging, this unlocks more complex GenAI applications for sophisticated tasks.
-  Project professionals should drive their GenAI development through self-directed learning and experimentation while seeking organizational support to maximize adoption and productivity gains.

About This Research

Between July and September of 2024, PMI conducted the third global study encompassing 2,000 project professionals, each representing their organization, and collecting data from 18 industry sectors in 12 countries. This study is the third in a series of global research projects designed to understand the state of GenAI in the project management profession, following our previous studies in March through April 2024 and December 2023 through January 2024.

As we were interested in GenAI usage trends and applications, using the technology for at least some

part of one's project work was a prerequisite for participating in the study. To account for differences in daily job functions and industries, we asked respondents what percentage of projects overall they use GenAI for rather than the total number of individual tasks.

In addition to the survey, we also interviewed 16 subject matter experts on GenAI and project management across the eight primary geographic regions of PMI. Their experience and perspectives helped guide our key takeaways from the research.

 Defining GenAI Adoption and Productivity Gains

- Adoption:**

The frequency and extent of GenAI usage in project management. Increase in adoption is frequency of use compared to six months prior. For example, an initial 2x to 3x (100 to 200%) increase in adoption means using GenAI twice to thrice as much as before, whether through using it for more projects, more tasks within projects or both.
- Productivity:**

The reported work efficiency achieved using GenAI in project management. Increase in productivity is the efficiency achieved by using GenAI compared to not using it. For example, an initial 2x to 3x (100 to 200%) increase in productivity means completing the same work in half the time or less when using GenAI versus not using it.

3 | Preparedness and Initiative: The Two Pillars of GenAI-Led Transformation

Success with GenAI hinges on two critical factors: preparedness and initiative. Preparedness encompasses the groundwork necessary for effective GenAI adoption, including fundamental technology skills, project management expertise, domain knowledge. Project professionals lacking preparedness often struggle to integrate GenAI tools seamlessly into their workflows, leading to suboptimal results and frustration. For instance, a lack of understanding of how large language models (LLMs) or GenAI work, combined with a lack of project management expertise or domain knowledge, will limit the quantity of use cases a professional can identify, experiment and implement as part of their daily work routine.

Crucially, preparedness work can and should begin before project professionals can formally adopt GenAI tools — while they're still navigating regulatory,

financial or technical barriers. This ensures that once the technology becomes available, they can quickly leverage it and realize its benefits. Those who wait to learn and acquire essential skills until they can implement GenAI without barriers risk falling behind competitors who laid the groundwork early.

Similarly important is initiative — the commitment and dedication to embrace GenAI as a transformative technology. This requires a genuine desire to leverage GenAI's capabilities and a proactive approach to learning and adapting to new ways of working. Without these elements, adoption efforts are likely to stall or remain superficial.

Key Insights

Project professionals who report major increases in GenAI adoption and productivity use the technology for complex tasks that require more advanced setup but higher productivity payoffs.

To get to advanced levels, project professionals must prepare on two fronts — preparedness (having the right foundation) and initiative (commitment to adoption) — to successfully leverage GenAI.

Preparedness		Initiative
 Tech Skills and Mindset	 Project Management Knowledge and Experience	 Learning Approach
Comfort with technology and an openness to new tools (early-adopter mindset)	Strong understanding of project management practices	Engagement in both formal and self-led GenAI learning
Viewing failures as learning opportunities and pushing through initial frustrations	Ability to identify relevant GenAI use cases	Active participation in GenAI workshops, training, communities and discussion
Proactive enhancement of tech skills and terminology	Ability to leverage domain expertise to enhance GenAI outputs	Seeking mentorship from GenAI experts

However, it’s important to note that achieving advanced gains in project management with GenAI isn’t purely an individual effort. Instead, it’s the combined power of personal drive and organizational support that drives project professionals and organizations to lead in GenAI adoption.

This report focuses on the project professional — exploring the specific traits that correlate with both higher adoption rates and significant productivity improvements, as identified by our research. We’ll discuss organizational preparedness and initiative in a separate report, that will be available on our [AI Hub](#), shortly following this report.

3.1 Cultivating Individual Preparedness With a Tech-Curious Mindset and Project Management Knowledge

Our research shows that those achieving the highest productivity gains share key characteristics: a tech-curious mindset, resilience and strong domain expertise when exploring new tools. Project professionals who lack these traits typically achieve only marginal improvements with GenAI, even in organizations with robust support systems. This highlights why moving from quick wins to transformative impact requires deliberately developing these characteristics. Understanding these key traits can help project professionals assess their preparedness and create focused development plans to achieve substantial results with GenAI.

3.1.1 Breaking the Inertia: A Tech-Curious Mindset

The journey to becoming a GenAI Trailblazer begins with mindset and a technological foundation. Our research reveals a striking disparity: Trailblazers are roughly eight times more likely than Explorers to achieve advanced adoption and 16 times more likely to achieve advanced productivity gains with GenAI (see [Figure 1](#)). Only 5% of Explorers reported an increase in GenAI usage of more than 3x compared to 43% of Trailblazers. This pattern is mirrored in productivity gains, where merely 3% of Explorers saw productivity increases of more than 3x, while 48% of Trailblazers achieved this level of improvement.

What drives this dramatic difference? Our data points ([Figure 3](#)) to the crucial role of a tech-curious mindset. Half (47%) of Trailblazers are “Pioneers” — first adopters of new technology — while only 2% are “Late Adopters.” Likewise, technological curiosity manifests in behavior: 58% of Trailblazers actively experiment with new GenAI applications very frequently, compared to just 12% of Explorers, with 26% of Explorers rarely trying new approaches.



Who Are Pioneers and Late Adopters?

Pioneers and Late Adopters are categorizations based on individuals' approaches to adopting new technologies (like GenAI) and their frequency of experimenting with new or untested methods or tools to project management work. Early Adopters and Pragmatists fall between these two groups on the spectrum of speed of adoption and frequency of experimentation.

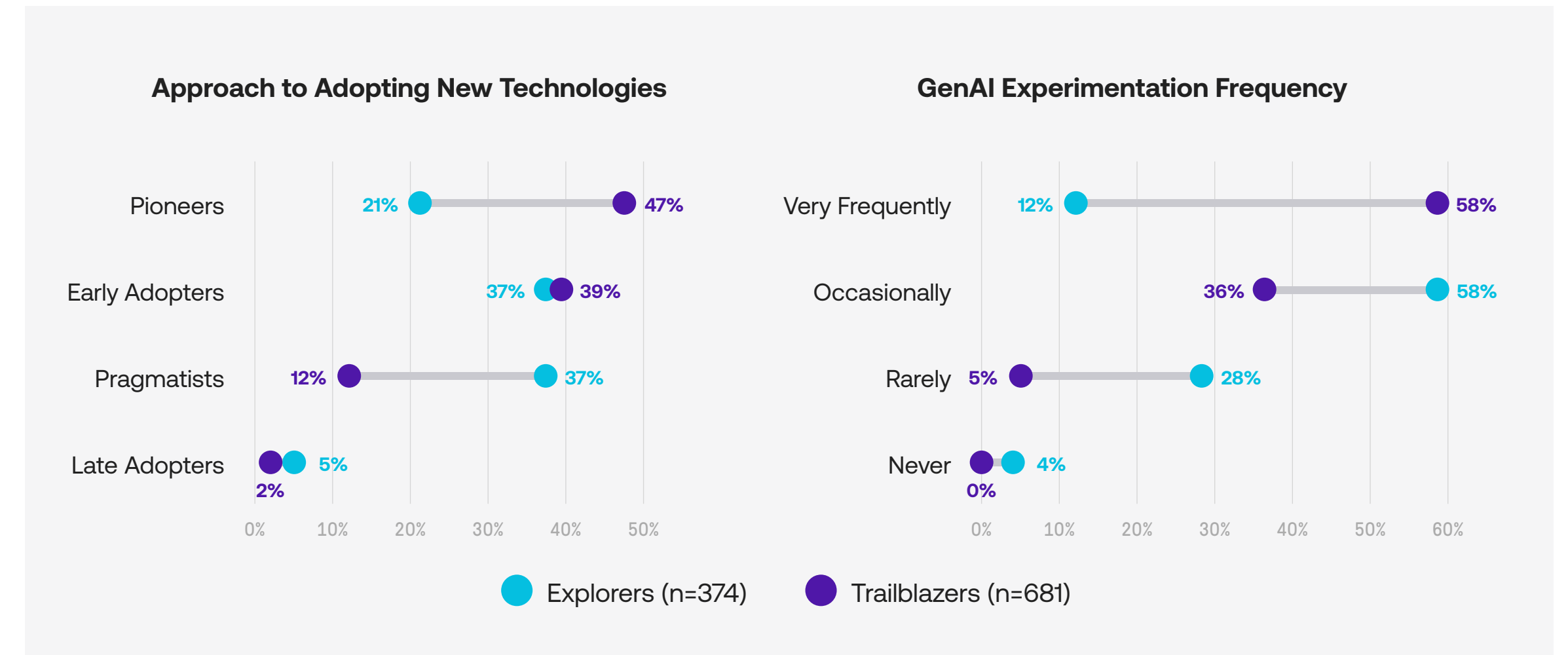
Pioneers

- Actively seek out and experiment with new technologies as soon as they become available
- Very frequently experiment with new and untested GenAI methods or tools

Late Adopters

- Hesitant to adopt new technologies, doing so only after many others in their field have or when it becomes necessary
- Rarely experiment with new and untested GenAI methods or tools

FIGURE 3. Comparing the Tech Mindsets of GenAI Explorers and Trailblazers



Q: How would you describe your approach to adopting new technologies such as GenAI?

Q: During the last six months, on approximately what percentage of your projects have you used GenAI for managing project work?

Q: When working with GenAI, how often do you experiment with new and untested methods or tools?

Source: PMI — Generative AI in Project Management Survey: Wave 3 (n=2,000)

Multiple experts interviewed as part of our research noted that they either had technical backgrounds (e.g., starting as programmers or developers) or quickly expanded their technical knowledge to better utilize GenAI. While a technical background isn't the single factor in using GenAI more effectively, understanding concepts like LLMs, machine learning and structured versus unstructured data provides advantages in maximizing its potential.

On the other hand, lacking essential technical understanding leads many new users to early stumbles. Kiron Bondale, senior consultant, Project Management, Aksys Consulting Inc., Canada, notes that “many people treat GenAI tools the way you treat the Google search query field, which really cripples what it can do.” Common errors such as these, which are rooted in a fundamental misunderstanding of how GenAI technology works, often result in frustrations and setbacks.

“End users vary in their technical proficiency. For team members who struggle with basic email platforms, adopting GenAI can feel like an overwhelming leap.”



Anjana Wijegunasinghe, head of analytics and tooling, Euroclear, U.K.

Understandably, for those who struggle with fundamental digital tools, the leap to GenAI can feel insurmountable. Yet, it's important to remember that understanding GenAI doesn't require a user to have the technical expertise of a software developer to effectively utilize it. Rather, it's about grasping how the technology works in a practical way.

Alonso Aguilar, industrial engineer, Kyndryl, Costa Rica admits that when he started his GenAI journey, he didn't know the difference between machine learning and generative AI. But he explains, “I wanted to know how these large language models worked and looked for quality information. That motivated me to take a Machine Learning Specialization on business use cases for machine learning and started learning about supervised learning, unsupervised learning and neural networks.” That foundation allowed him to leverage his organization's Copilot's integration with GitHub and SharePoint to access and learn from existing code bases as well as past project documents, massively reducing the learning curve on highly technical projects. Investing the time to learn about technical concepts can seem daunting but is doable and unlocks potentially massive productivity breakthroughs.

The organizational environment also plays a crucial role, based on how much the organization is supporting the adoption of emerging technologies like GenAI. For instance, in Foundational organizations — those with little or no

support — only 8% reported advanced GenAI usage, and just 5% saw advanced productivity gains. In contrast, Peak organizations — those that provide great support — saw 41% of respondents reporting advanced increase in GenAI usage and 46% achieving advanced productivity gains (see [Figure 13](#) in the Appendix).

However, determined individuals can overcome organizational barriers. One subject matter expert shared how they invested over 100 hours in self-directed learning to build a compelling proof of concept that convinced their risk-averse management to embrace GenAI. Yet this self-directed approach carries risks — without proper organizational support, individuals may inadvertently expose sensitive data when using public GenAI tools. Moreover, professionals advancing their AI capabilities independently may ultimately seek opportunities elsewhere to fully leverage their enhanced skills, leading to talent drain from organizations that don't support GenAI adoption.

As Andrew Rosado Hartline, project manager at Innovative-e, Inc., USA, emphasizes: “Curiosity and that desire really is a true driving force when it comes to adopting AI. It's not just ‘what's in it for me.’ It really, truly has to inspire people to use it.” This mindset of continuous experimentation and learning emerges as the key differentiator between those who achieve breakthrough results with GenAI and those who don't.

3.1.2 Trust Your Expertise: Leveraging Domain Knowledge to Optimize GenAI Outputs

In our research, we examined several indicators of domain expertise, including professional role and certifications. Our data reveals that 65% of Trailblazers are full-time project managers,

compared to only 44% of Explorers (see [Figure 4](#)).

Additionally, professionals with two or more certifications are more likely to report

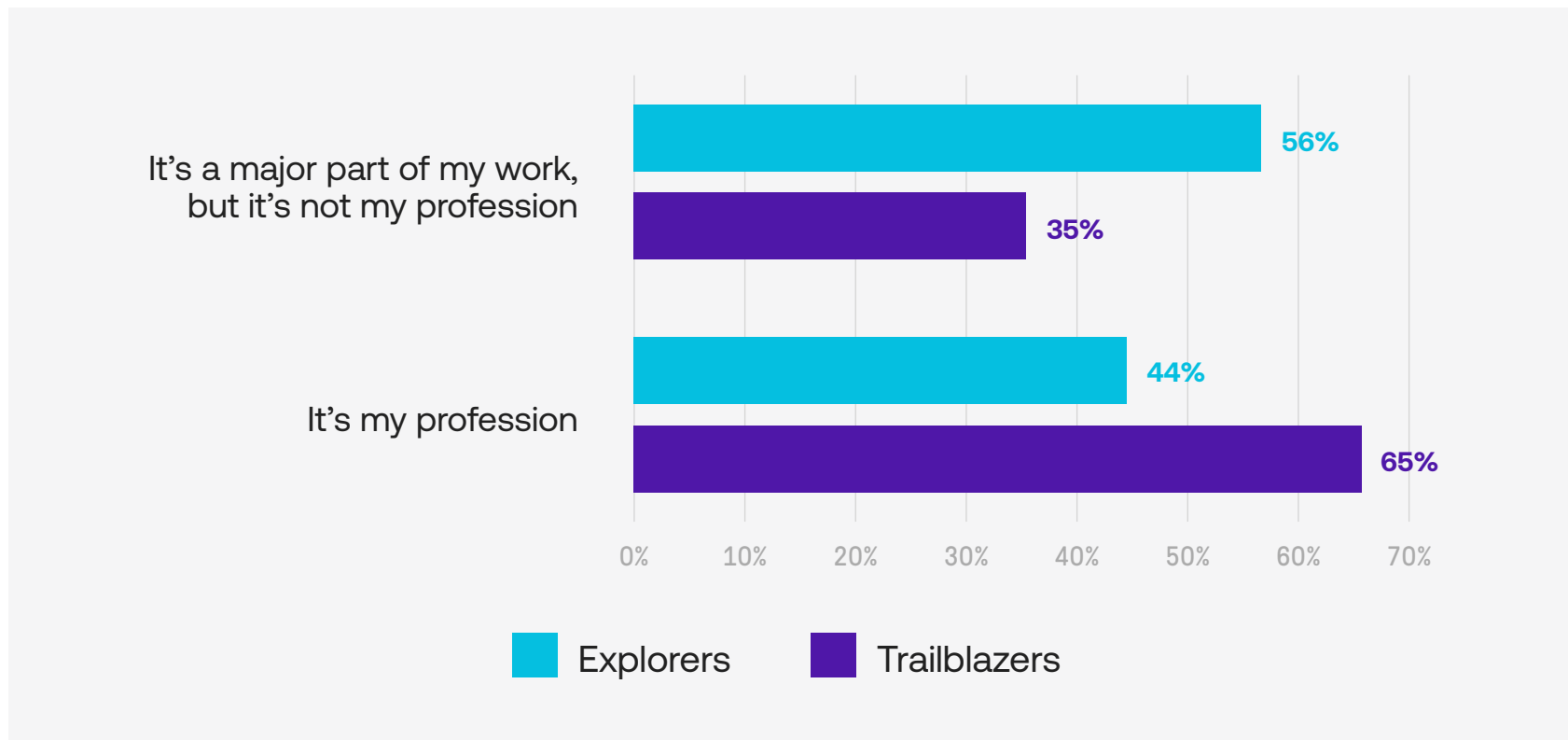
advanced adoption and productivity gains than those with one or no certifications (see [Figure 5](#)). While these metrics don't capture all aspects of expertise, they suggest that deep project management knowledge and experience contribute to successful GenAI adoption and impact. At minimum, understanding the formal concepts of project management allows users to engage with GenAI tools more effectively, which often require precise terminology when prompted.

Domain knowledge and project management experience significantly impact an individual's ability to adopt and leverage GenAI effectively.

Why is domain knowledge so crucial? As Andrew Rosado Hartline, project manager at Innovative-e, Inc., USA notes, "GenAI doesn't know what you don't know." Only through understanding good project management practices can professionals create effective prompts to maximize GenAI tools. Furthermore, as we highlighted in our previous report, "[Pushing the Limits](#),"⁴ GenAI tools can "hallucinate" and provide misinformation. Deep domain knowledge enables project professionals to quickly identify and correct these errors.

Claudia Rodriguez, security sales specialist at Microsoft, Colombia, emphasizes this point: "It's important that we talk about the usage of GenAI as a tool. We always have to give this tool to professionals with project management skills to review and ensure that the information that is important to the execution or planification of the project is accurate and complete."

FIGURE 4. The Distribution of GenAI Explorers and Trailblazers Across Job Roles



Q: To what extent do you manage projects?

Q: During the last six months, on approximately what percentage of your projects have you used GenAI for managing project work?

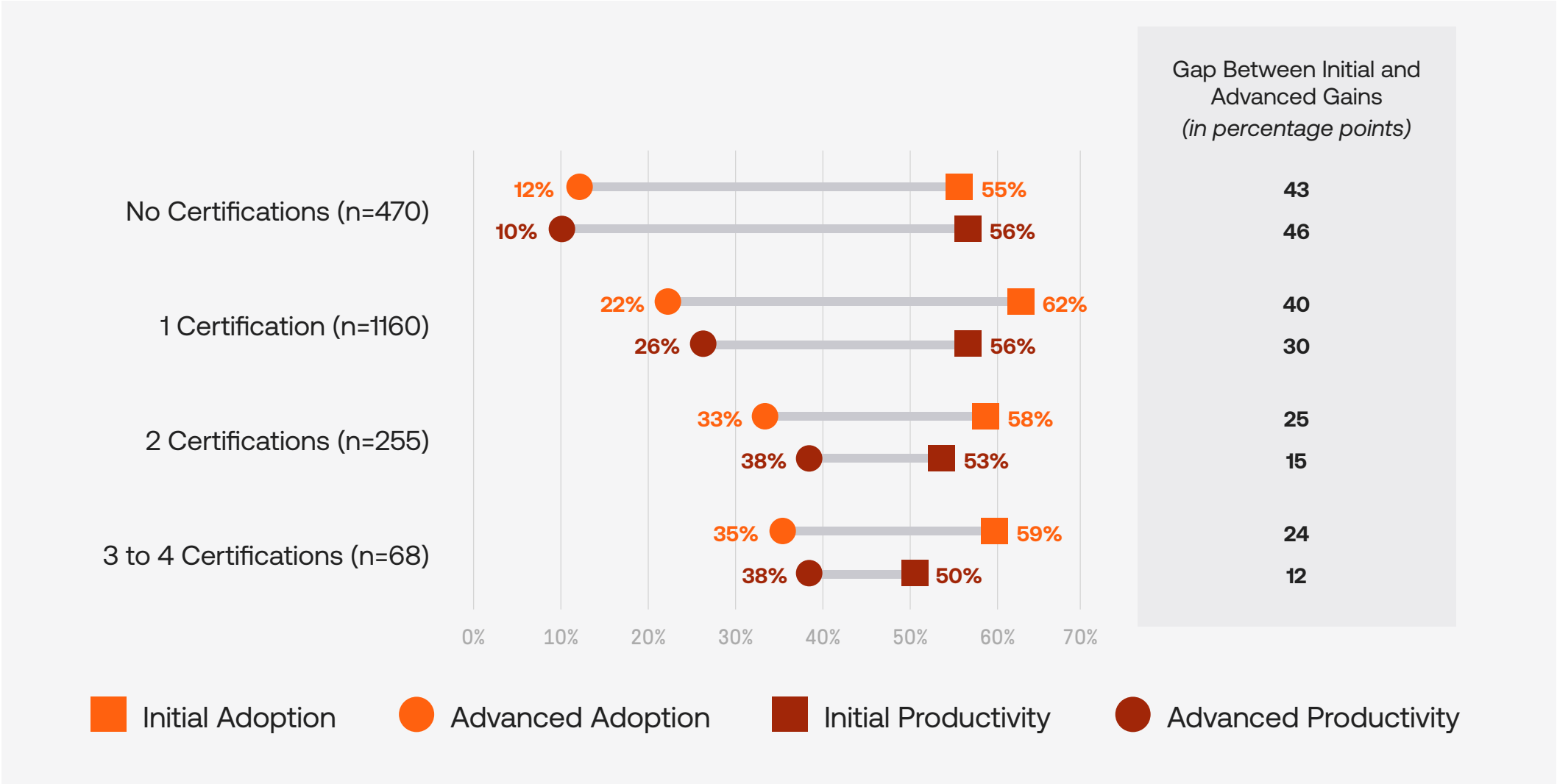
Source: PMI — Generative AI in Project Management Survey: Wave 3 (n=2,000)

“To fully benefit from AI, you need both technical expertise and a deep understanding of your specific field. It's this combination that produces truly valuable outcomes.”



Tu Tao, senior program manager at DIDI, and International PMO Leader, Co-founder of AI for Everyone Community, China

FIGURE 5. Number of Certifications Correlated With GenAI Adoption and Productivity



Q: Please indicate how much your use of GenAI for managing projects has increased compared to six months ago.
Q: Please indicate how much your use of GenAI has increased your productivity when managing projects.
Q: Do you have any project management certifications?

Source: PMI — Generative AI in Project Management Survey: Wave 3 (n=2,000)

Along with domain knowledge, our follow-up interviews with subject matter experts revealed a clear theme about what helps professionals achieve advanced productivity gains: persistent determination in the face of challenges. Our interviewees consistently emphasized that sustained persistence is essential when applying GenAI to complex tasks like talent/resource management, decision support and risk management. These applications often require extensive trial and error, particularly when navigating organizational barriers.

Kiron Bondale, senior consultant, Project Management, Aksys Consulting Inc., Canada, exemplifies this through his experience: “There’s no question, in the early days, I managed to get it to produce a lot of hallucinations, but I stuck with it.” Success requires embracing failure as part of the learning process and maintaining persistence through initial frustrations to unlock GenAI’s full potential.

“Resilience is crucial — without it, people tend to give up on technology too soon. GenAI use is iterative; it requires persistence and an open mindset to work through limitations, especially as updates and functionalities evolve.”



Andrew Rosado Hartline, project manager, Innovative-e, Inc., USA

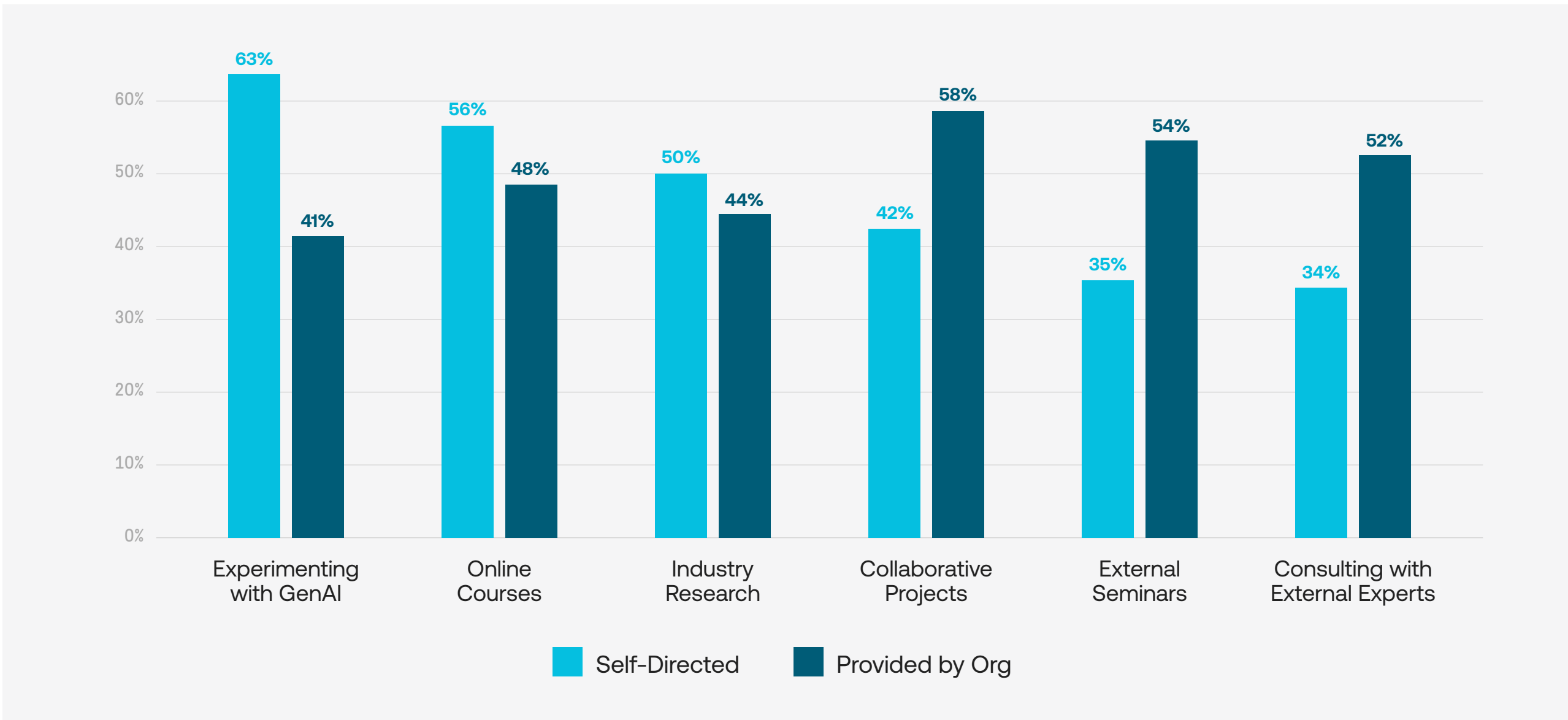
3.2 The Initiative to Learn: Fueling Personal GenAI Growth With Learning and Support Mechanisms

Individual initiative is a key factor in the successful adoption and mastery of GenAI tools. A common trait among all our subject matter experts (SMEs) is an intellectual curiosity to seek out and learn what they don't understand. Even within organizations that provide robust support through collaborative projects, workshops and expert consultations, those who demonstrate the drive to teach themselves and try new approaches differentiate themselves in their GenAI mastery.

While organizations support GenAI skill development through collaborative projects, workshops and expert consultations, the data show that self-directed learning plays a crucial role. As evident from our data (see [Figure 6](#)), professionals take significant personal initiative in pursuing methods like experimenting with tools and online courses, where self-directed learning dominates.

Trailblazers in particular are characterized by their proactive approach to learning, often engaging in self-directed methods such as experimenting with GenAI tools on their own, learning through online courses and conducting industry research (see [Figure 7](#)). Across all activities, at least 33% of Trailblazers report pursuing learning methods to develop GenAI skills. That's at least one-third more than the number of Explorers for most of the learning methods we studied.

FIGURE 6. The Balance Between Self-Directed and Organization-Provided Learning Methods for GenAI Skill Development



- Q: Experimenting with GenAI tools on my own (trial and error) — How have you primarily developed your skills in using GenAI for managing projects and were these efforts self-directed, pushed by your organization, both, or neither?
- Q: Learning through online courses and tutorials — How have you primarily developed your skills in using GenAI for managing projects and were these efforts self-directed, pushed by your organization, both, or neither?
- Q: Research and reading industry publications or papers — How have you primarily developed your skills in using GenAI for managing projects and were these efforts self-directed, pushed by your organization, both, or neither?
- Q: Collaborative projects with colleagues — How have you primarily developed your skills in using GenAI for managing projects and were these efforts self-directed, pushed by your organization, both, or neither?
- Q: External workshops, seminars, or conferences — How have you primarily developed your skills in using GenAI for managing projects and were these efforts self-directed, pushed by your organization, both, or neither?
- Q: Consulting with external experts — How have you primarily developed your skills in using GenAI for managing projects and were these efforts self-directed, pushed by your organization, both, or neither?

Source: PMI — Generative AI in Project Management Survey: Wave 3 (n=2,000)

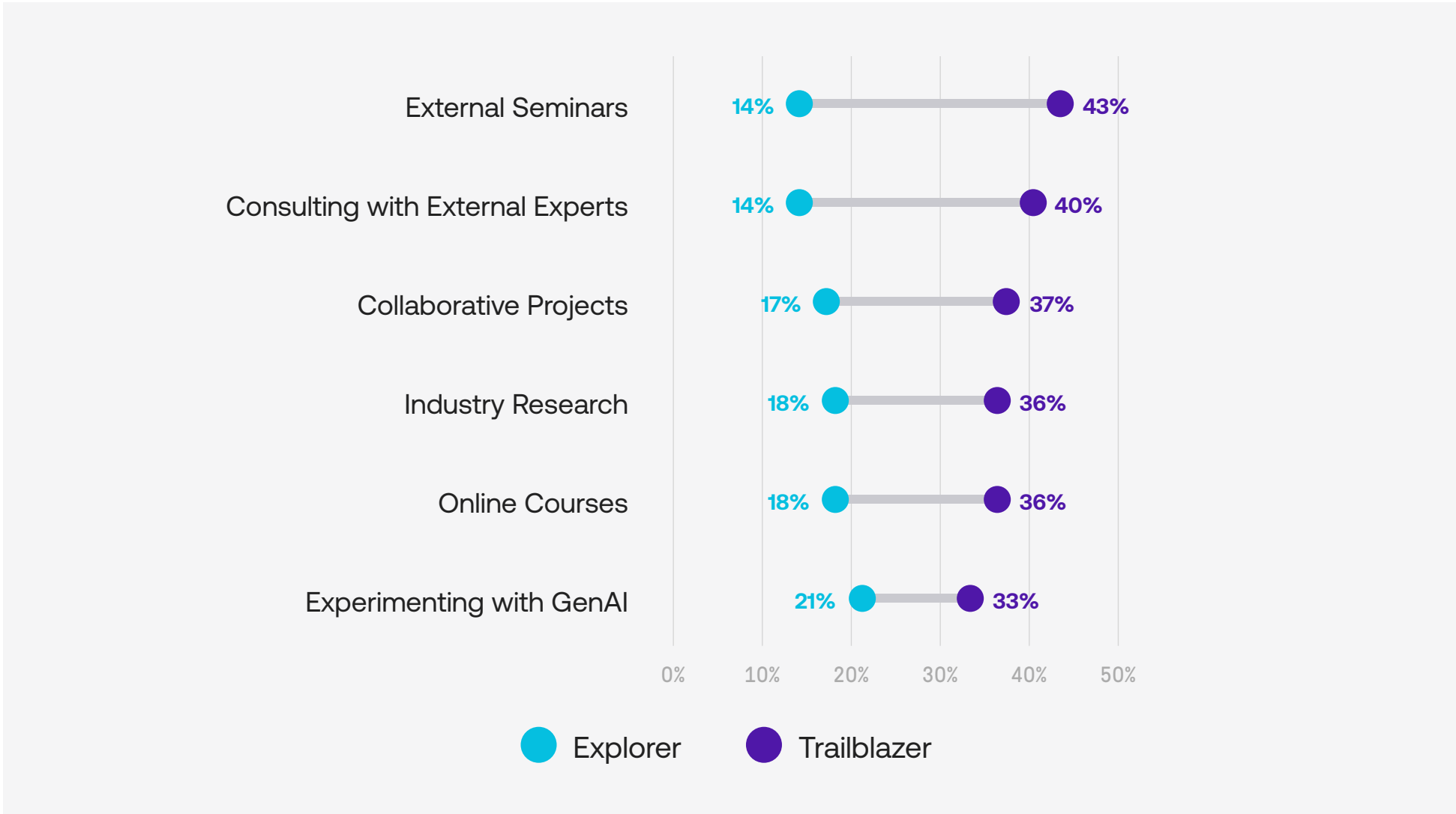
The onus can't solely be on organizations to make learning opportunities available; it's ultimately up to the individual project professional to demonstrate the willingness to learn from these resources and apply the knowledge gained. Project professionals must be proactive in their learning, including self-directed educational programs. Additionally, they should embrace experimentation, viewing failures as valuable learning experiences rather than setbacks. This willingness to act isn't limited to Trailblazers; even Explorers engage in these learning methods, albeit to a lesser extent than Trailblazers (see [Figure 7](#)). By consistently engaging with GenAI tools, staying updated on industry developments, and collaborating with colleagues and experts, project professionals can develop the skills necessary to drive GenAI adoption and productivity gains.

“The rapid advancement of Generative AI necessitates that project professionals take ownership of their learning. Self-directed development is critical to remaining competitive. Leading organizations facilitate this by providing AI upskilling opportunities and leveraging modern learning and development tools, such as workshops, webinars and innovation cohorts. Access to learning and growth opportunities has become a key factor when onboarding or transitioning roles. Consequently, a handshake of continuous learning mindset with commitment to growth is essential for success in this dynamic landscape.”



Aditya Kumar, senior AVP, Delivery Management, EXL, India

FIGURE 7. The Distinctive Learning Methods of GenAI Explorers and Trailblazers



- Q: During the last six months, on approximately what percentage of your projects have you used GenAI for managing project work?
- Q: External workshops, seminars, or conferences — How have you primarily developed your skills in using GenAI for managing projects and were these efforts self-directed, pushed by your organization, both, or neither?
- Q: Consulting with external experts — How have you primarily developed your skills in using GenAI for managing projects and were these efforts self-directed, pushed by your organization, both, or neither?
- Q: Collaborative projects with colleagues — How have you primarily developed your skills in using GenAI for managing projects and were these efforts self-directed, pushed by your organization, both, or neither?
- Q: Research and reading industry publications or papers — How have you primarily developed your skills in using GenAI for managing projects and were these efforts self-directed, pushed by your organization, both, or neither?
- Q: Learning through online courses and tutorials — How have you primarily developed your skills in using GenAI for managing projects and were these efforts self-directed, pushed by your organization, both, or neither?
- Q: Experimenting with GenAI tools on my own (trial and error) — How have you primarily developed your skills in using GenAI for managing projects and were these efforts self-directed, pushed by your organization, both, or neither?

Source: PMI — Generative AI in Project Management Survey: Wave 3 (n=2,000)

Individual Initiative in Action

“I took a program at MIT on how GenAI works for businesses ... I also reached out to the PMI community. We have a lot of tools to reach for our own tasks that we can personalize for our daily work.”



Rita Donayre Iturri, founder and president,
General Professional Services USA

“When ChatGPT launched, I saw this as something that could impact project management, so I started exploring on my own. I spent a lot of time informally but also formally learning, playing around with various tools like ChatGPT, Claude and Copilot. I even took courses on prompt engineering to gain more confidence in using GenAI effectively.”



Kiron Bondale, senior consultant, Project
Management, Aksys Consulting Inc., Canada

“My learning with AI has been largely self-directed; I use resources like Coursera and DeepLearning.AI to understand more advanced topics. My organization provides some AI tools, but really, progress comes from exploring external resources. It’s about driving your own education and using the tools that work for you.”



Tu Tao, senior program manager at DIDI, and
International PMO leader, Co-founder of AI for
Everyone Community, China

“My journey was entirely self-taught. Over time, I moved from beginner to advanced by diving into resources like programming courses and experimenting with AI in real scenarios. It’s a gradual shift — start small and work your way up to more complex applications.”



John Choate, founder and chief project officer,
Global AI Supply Chain Solutions, USA

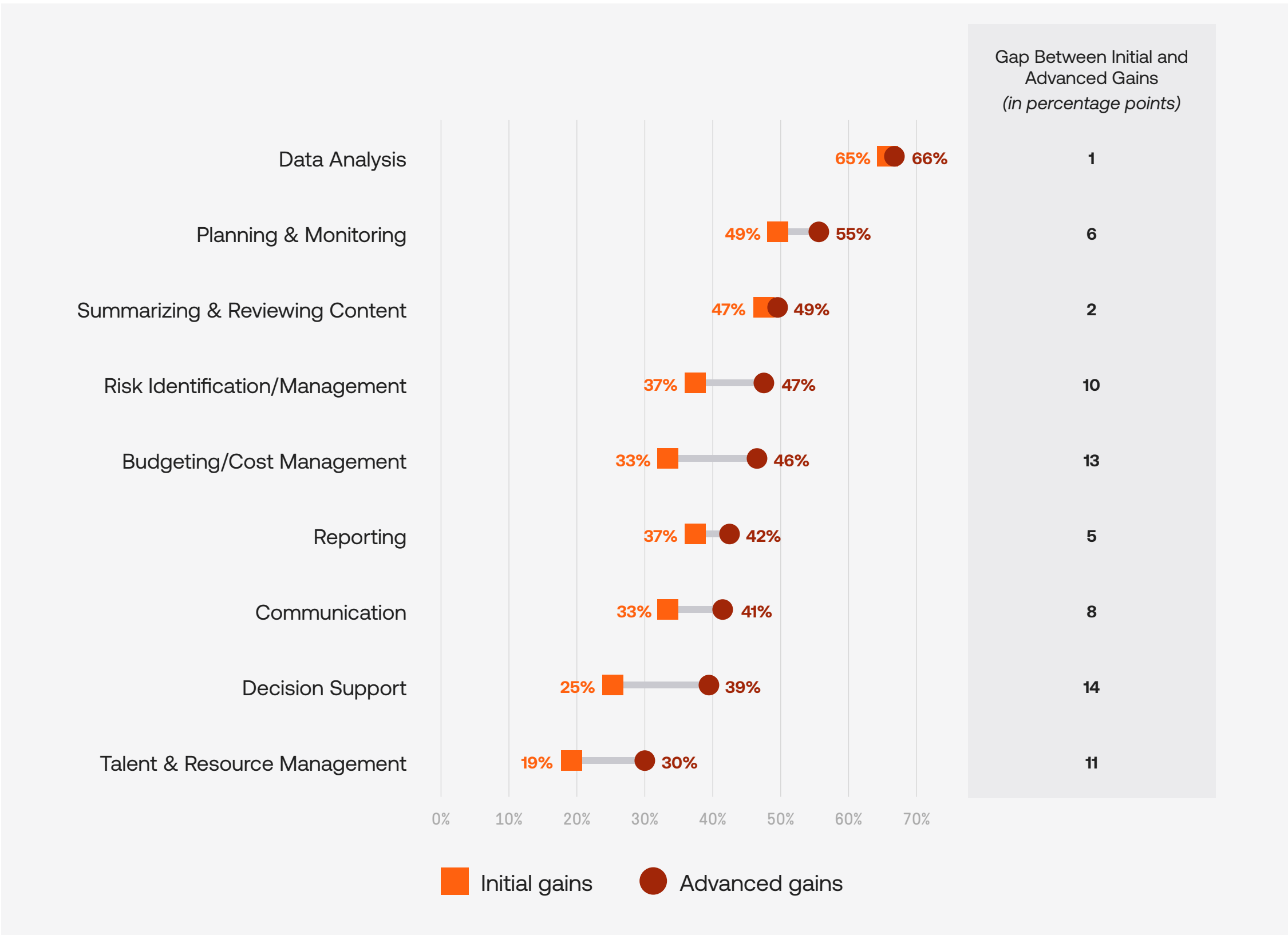


3.3 The Payoff: Where Do Trailblazers Get Their Advantage?

The investment in learning GenAI delivers dramatic returns when applied to sophisticated tasks. Our data reveals that project professionals achieving advanced productivity gains are those who use GenAI for complex activities like cost management and decision support. While many start with basic tasks like content summarization, it's the mastery of these more challenging applications that appears to unlock GenAI's greatest productivity benefits (Figure 8). This pattern holds true across user types, organizational support levels and usage rates.

This reinforces a key finding from our previous report, "[Pushing the Limits](#),"⁵ the path to maximizing GenAI's value requires moving beyond basic automation to tackle complex, high-value tasks. However, this journey requires support. The most effective approach combines self-directed learning with organizational backing, creating an environment that enables project professionals to master these advanced applications and achieve substantial productivity gains.

FIGURE 8. The Relationship Between Task Complexity and Productivity Gains



Q: For Project P, which of the following activities did you use GenAI for? (Select all that apply.)
 Q: Using the slider below, please indicate how much your use of GenAI has increased your productivity when managing projects.
 Source: PMI — Generative AI in Project Management Survey: Wave 3 (n=2,000)

Getting Started — Advice From Those Who Are Leading the Way

Knowledge Is Key to Overcome Fear

“Knowledge is power, especially to counter fear and hesitation. We’ve curated targeted content in our [organization’s] learning platform that caters to different experience levels, so everyone — from decision-makers to operational staff — can find resources that suit them.”



Ati Ngubevana, group executive, Vodacom, South Africa

Adoption Is Faster Than You Think

“When we first introduced generative AI in project management training, many were skeptical, seeing it as complex. However, once they began using it, their concerns quickly disappeared. It soon became a routine tool, with adoption outpacing that of earlier technologies.”



Dr. Ayman Masnour Murad, PM enabler and authorized training partner, PMP/CAP Instructor, Jordan

Iterate and Learn From Mistakes

“Expect to iterate like you’re never going to get a prompt right the first time. Never. If the tool is going to give you back what you expect, fully expect to give it three or four or five iterations. Ask it to ask you questions to make sure it understands the context.”



Kiron Bondale, senior consultant, Project Management, Aksys Consulting Inc., Canada

Key Takeaways

For project professionals:

- Develop both technical understanding of GenAI and strong domain expertise, including business acumen; this combination is crucial for achieving advanced productivity gains and unlocking transformative opportunities.
- Take ownership of your learning journey through self-directed study and experimentation, even if organizational support is limited.
- Focus on mastering complex applications like cost management and decision support, as these yield the highest productivity gains.

For organizations:

- Provide structured support while encouraging individual initiative; the most successful adoption combines both organizational backing and self-directed learning.
- Be aware that project professionals in organizations with limited support for GenAI are much less likely to see high productivity gains, limiting the benefit the organization can derive from its employees' long-term GenAI usage.
- Create safe environments for experimentation and learning to help professionals advance beyond basic task execution.

For the project management profession:

- Project management expertise and domain knowledge remain essential; GenAI amplifies rather than replaces professional judgment.
- The profession must evolve to incorporate new skills like prompt engineering and AI tool evaluation alongside sharpening business-acumen skills and competencies.

4 | Taking the Lead: Start Your GenAI Journey Now

As we stand on the brink of a transformative era in project management, GenAI is rapidly becoming a crucial differentiator for project professionals. Our research reveals that 27% of project professionals report GenAI already impacts more than half their work, and 46% expect this level of impact to increase in the next five years. Those who embrace this technology now will set themselves apart, not only in their current roles but in the future of project management itself.

While organizational support is undeniably a critical factor in maximizing GenAI's potential, waiting for an organization

to provide all the resources and guidance can stall personal growth and opportunities. We encourage project professionals to take charge of their own GenAI journey — exploring available tools, experimenting with use cases and building foundational skills independently. By doing so, they position themselves as forward-thinking leaders who can advocate for and drive GenAI adoption within their organizations, ultimately benefiting both their organization and their personal careers.

Here's how you, as an individual project professional, can take proactive steps to lead your own GenAI journey:

1 Own Your Learning Path

Your GenAI journey is personal. Begin by exploring tools that align with your daily tasks, even if they're as simple as data summarization or initial report generation. Dive into online resources, workshops or even peer discussions to deepen your understanding. A growth mindset toward this technology will enable you to stay adaptable and skilled as GenAI continues to evolve.

2 Experiment and Iterate

Experimentation is essential for mastering GenAI tools. Try new applications, discover what works for your unique needs and don't be deterred by initial setbacks. Treat each learning curve as part of your path forward. The resilience to push through obstacles will enable you to tackle more sophisticated tasks with GenAI, which are bound to yield significant improvements in productivity and project outcomes.

3 Seek Out Resources and Ask for Support

While individual initiative is all that's in your control, organizational support can significantly accelerate your GenAI journey. If your organization doesn't yet offer the resources or structured learning paths you need, leverage the tools available to you and communicate your needs to leadership. Taking charge by advocating for necessary resources and fostering discussions around GenAI's potential benefits may encourage broader organizational support for this transformative technology.

In scenarios where organizational resources are still forthcoming, continue to advance your knowledge and application of GenAI within your capacity. Utilize freely available tools and platforms to experiment and apply GenAI concepts to your projects. This proactive approach not only enhances your skills but also positions you as a forward-thinking leader within your team.

4 Lead by Example

As you develop your proficiency, share your learning and experiences with peers. Mentor others who are less familiar with GenAI and build a community of practice within your organization. If your superiors are hesitant about GenAI, demonstrate how it can be utilized safely and ethically in your organization. Leading by example can foster a culture of continuous learning and adaptation, which is critical in a landscape that's continuously being reshaped by technological advancements.

5 Elevate Your Role With GenAI

Consider how GenAI can enhance your strategic value. Use it to drive data-backed insights, improve decision-making and introduce innovative project practices. Discover case studies uniquely applicable to your organization or industry. Set a goal for how you want your GenAI expertise to burnish your profile as a project professional and map out a clear roadmap for getting there. By applying GenAI thoughtfully, you position yourself as a forward-thinking project professional capable of navigating complex challenges and adding measurable value.

GenAI represents a profound opportunity to redefine project management roles and practices. By stepping into this technology proactively — with an open mind and a strategic approach — you're not only shaping your career trajectory but also contributing to the future of the project management profession. Take this as your call to action: engage, explore and lead the way in the GenAI era.

5 | About the Research (n=2,000)

PM Role

56%
It is my profession

44%
It is a major part of my
work, not my profession

Gender

Female	40%
Male	60%
Nonbinary	0%

PM Certifications

0	24%
1	58%
2+	16%
Prefer not to say	2%
Is PMP certified	42%

Countries

United States	15%
India	15%
United Kingdom	15%
Germany	15%
Australia	15%
Japan	5%
Canada	4%
United Arab Emirates	4%
Nigeria/South Africa	4%
Brazil	4%
Mexico	4%

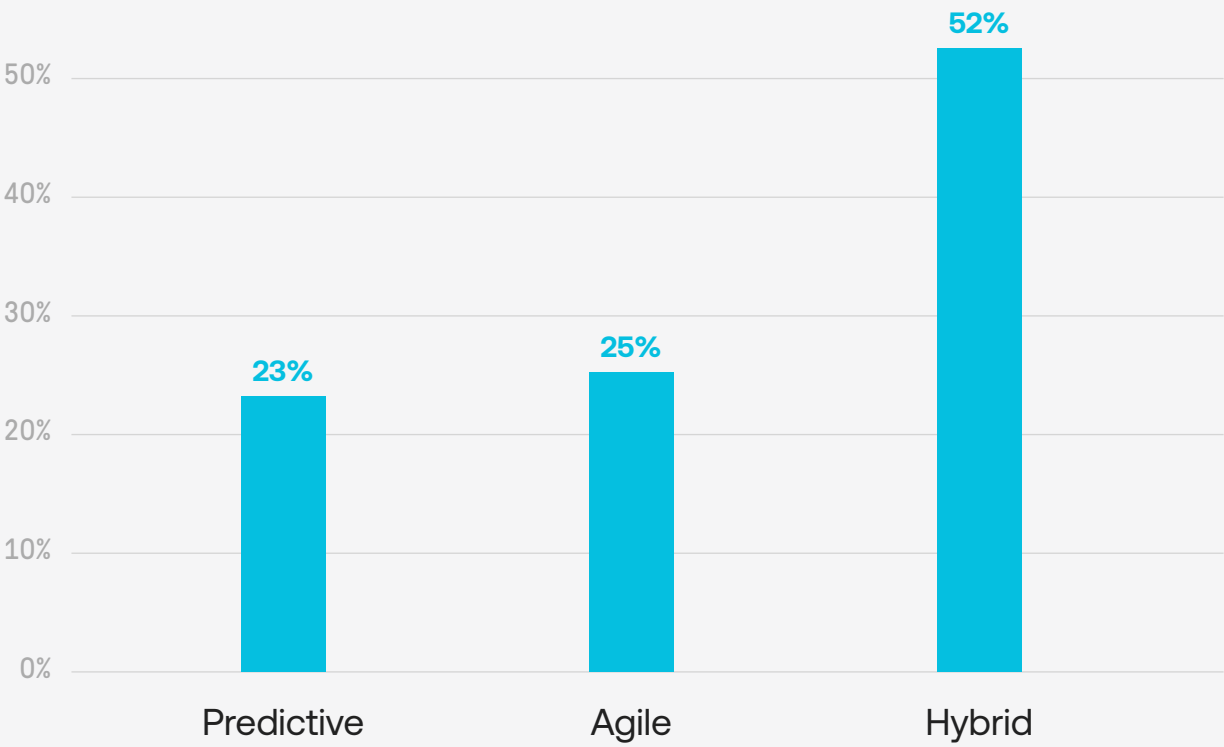
Organization Size

Fewer than 100 employees	21%
100 to 999	41%
1,000 to 4,999	18%
5,000 to 19,999	12%
More than 20,000	8%

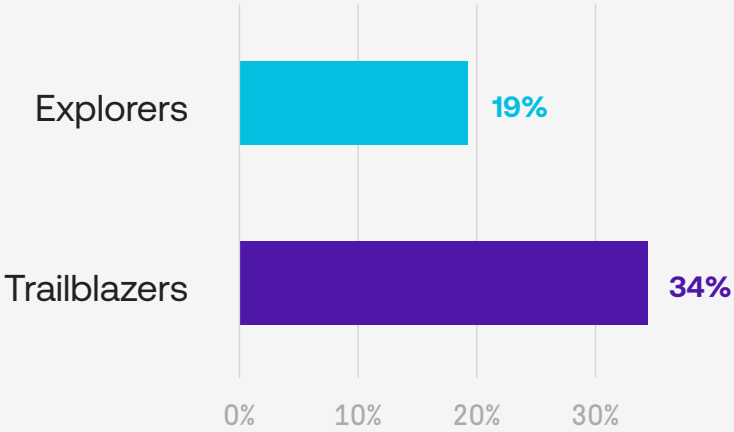
Organization's Focus

Information Technology	17%
Financial Services	11%
Manufacturing	10%
Construction	9%
Healthcare	8%
Retail	7%
Consulting	6%
Training/Education	6%
Transportation/Logistics/Distribution	5%
Government	3%
Food and Beverage	3%
Telecom	3%
Energy	3%
Automotive	2%
Legal	1%
Pharmaceutical	1%
Aerospace	1%
Mining	0%
Other	5%

Project Management Methodology



Total Respondents



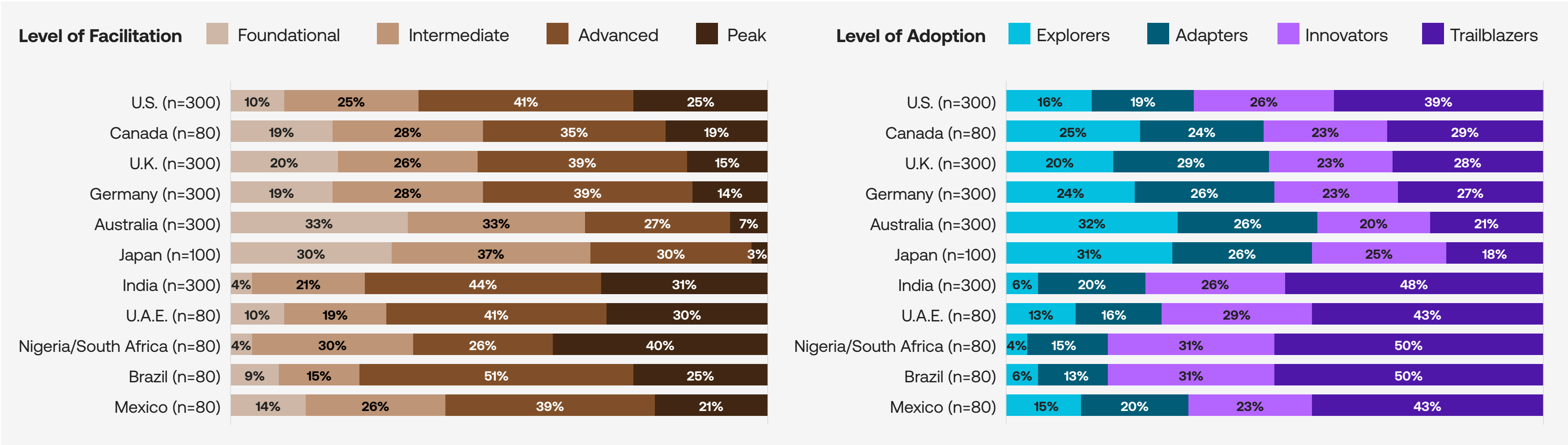
6 | Acknowledgments

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- **Devesh Mothilall**, advisor on AI, City of Johannesburg, South Africa
- **Ati Ngubevana**, group executive, Vodacom, South Africa
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- **Anjana Wijegunasinghe**, head of analytics and tooling, Euroclear, U.K.

7 | Appendix

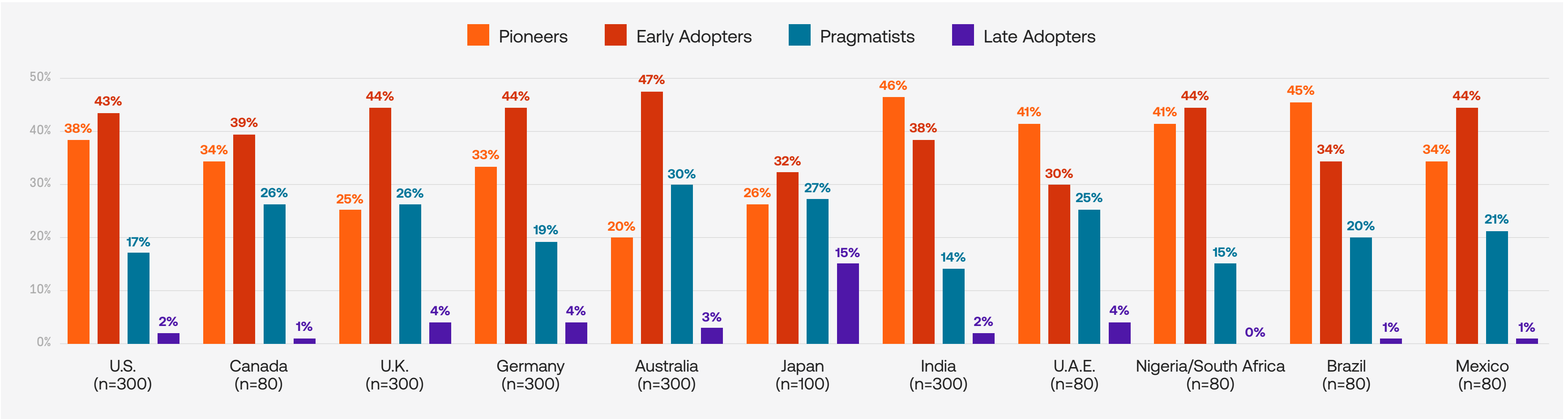
FIGURE 9. Organizational GenAI Facilitation and Adoption Level by Country



Q: How well established is your organization's support of the use of genAI for managing projects?
Q: During the last six months, on approximately what percentage of your projects have you used GenAI for managing project work?

Source: PMI — Generative AI in Project Management Survey: Wave 3 (n=2,000)

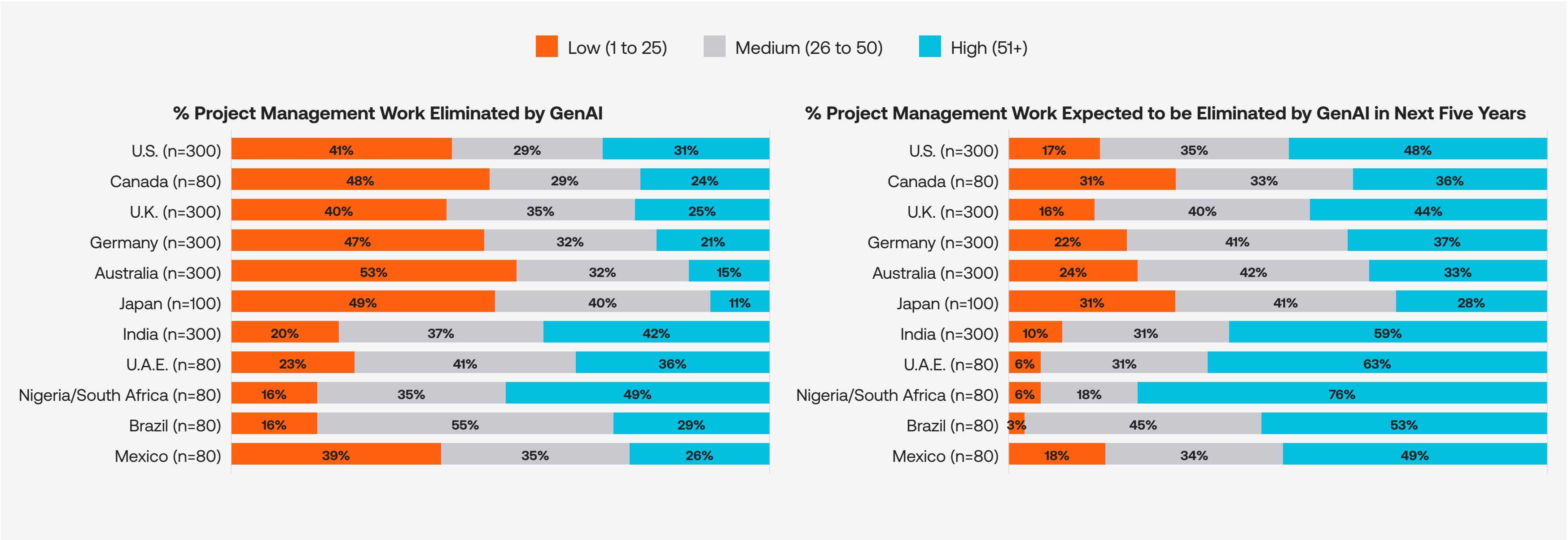
FIGURE 10. Technology Adoption Approach by Country



Q: How would you describe your approach to adopting new technologies such as GenAI?

Source: PMI — Generative AI in Project Management Survey: Wave 3 (n=2,000)

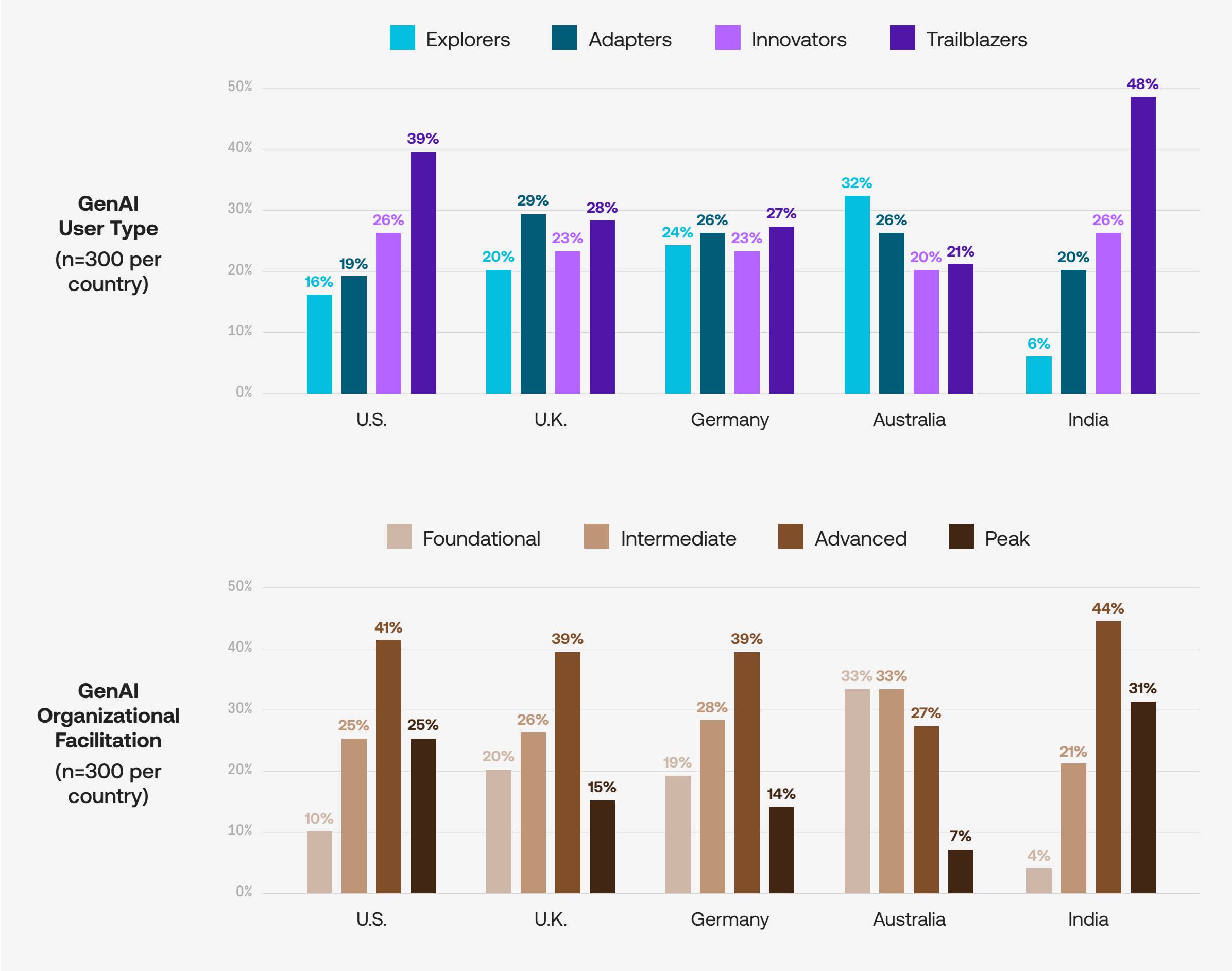
FIGURE 11. Work Impact by Country



Q: How much of your project management work up to this point has been eliminated or completely automated by the integration of generative AI technologies? Please provide your estimate as a percentage.
 Q: Looking ahead to the next five years, how much of your project management work could be potentially eliminated or completely automated by the integration of generative AI technologies?

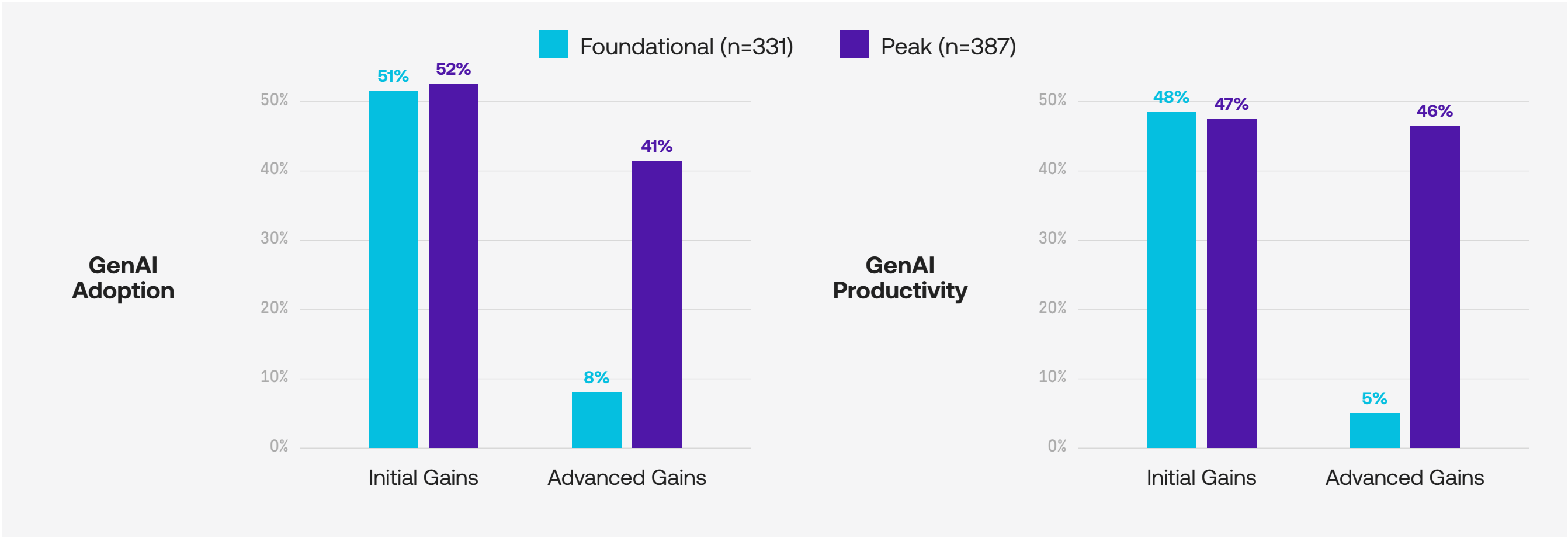
Source: PMI — Generative AI in Project Management Survey: Wave 3 (n=2,000)

FIGURE 12. User and Organization Type by Country



Q: During the last six months, on approximately what percentage of your projects have you used GenAI for managing project work?
 Q: How well established is your organization’s support of the use of GenAI for managing projects?
 Note: These countries were selected because their base size in the survey was large enough to make nationwide comparisons. The Appendix contains a full breakdown of GenAI users and organizations for every country we surveyed.
 Source: PMI — Generative AI in Project Management Survey: Wave 3 (n=2,000)

FIGURE 13. GenAI Usage and Productivity Increases in Foundational and Peak Organizations



Q: How much your use of GenAI for managing projects has increased compared to six months ago?

Q: How much your use of GenAI has increased your productivity when managing projects?

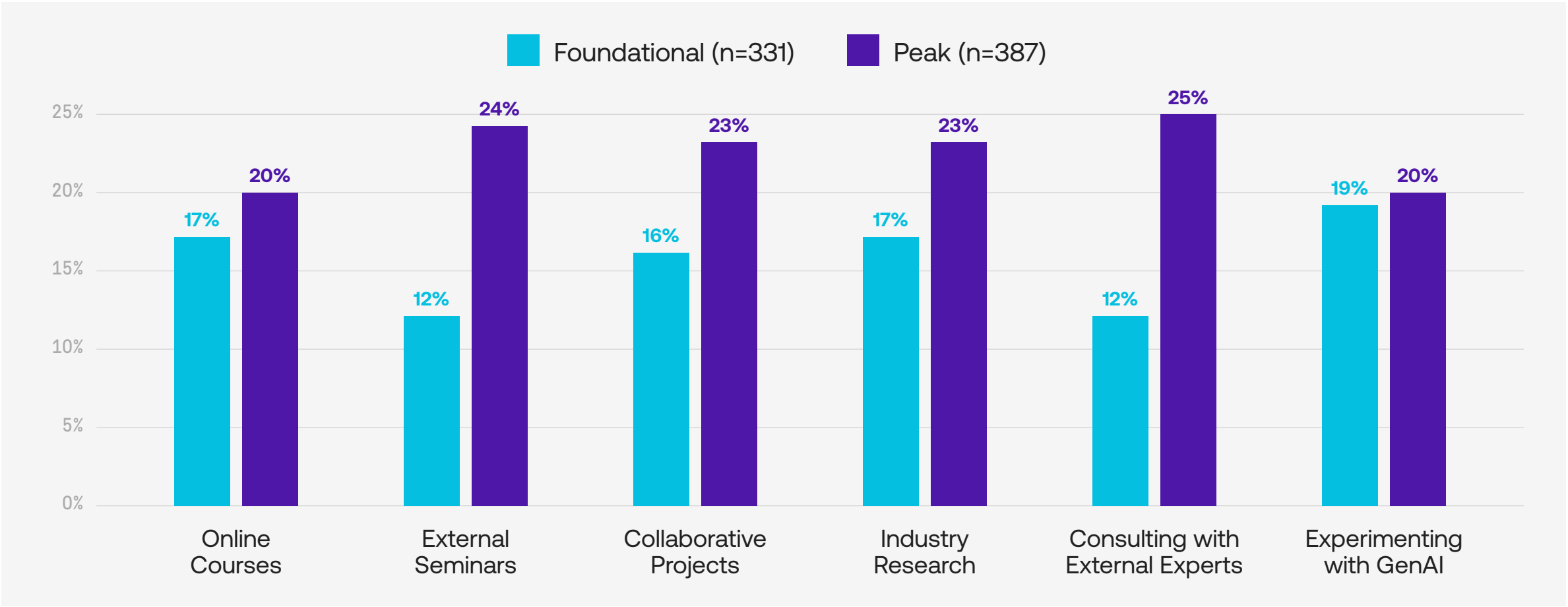
Q: How well established is your organization's support of the use of GenAI for managing

Q: Using the slider below, please indicate how much your use of GenAI for managing projects has increased compared to six months ago.

Q: Using the slider below, please indicate how much your use of GenAI has increased your productivity when managing projects.

Source: PMI — Generative AI in Project Management Survey: Wave 3 (n=2,000)

FIGURE 14. Percentage of Self-Directed Learners in Peak and Foundational Organizations by Learning Model



Q: How have you primarily developed your skills in using GenAI for managing projects and were these efforts self-directed, pushed by your organization, both, or neither?

Q: How well established is your organization's support of the use of GenAI for managing projects?

Q: Using the slider below, please indicate how much your use of GenAI for managing projects has increased compared to six months ago.

Q: Using the slider below, please indicate how much your use of GenAI has increased your productivity when managing projects.

Source: PMI — Generative AI in Project Management Survey: Wave 3 (n=2,000)

8 | References

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